

PAPERCLIPS

MFCP the official newsletter of Midwest Free Community Papers
midwest free community papers

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Midwest Free Community Papers presents

GRAPHICS WEBINAR

October 26 at 1 pm

It's that time of year again when the days get shorter, the leaves turn color, it gets a little colder, and Adobe releases updates to Creative Cloud software.



Tune in as Russell and Julia Viers show the new features they are already using on various projects and how many of them can literally change the way you work.

They'll cover Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Bridge, and more.

There will be a lot of discussion about the new artificial intelligence tools, as well as some not new ones, and the difference between AI and generative AI...and why that matters for newspapers.

**Register today at
mfcpc.org**



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President's Corner



Joyce Frericks

Face-to-Face Sales

When taking the time to walk through the door can make all the difference.

I heard a story recently about an elderly man who went to the bank with his son. The son told his father that everything they did at the bank could have done online. They could set it up on his phone, and he would no longer need to go into the bank. The father declined.

The father told his son he wanted to see the people at the bank. He lived alone, and he needed the face-to-face interaction with people. The people at the bank knew him by name and vice versa. They were part of his emotional support. They had been there for him when his wife was ill, and they were now his friends.

On hearing this story, my thoughts immediately went to our sales staff. They are the same as the father in the story. They need human interaction. Yes, they can probably do most of their duties sitting at a computer sending out emails, but the human interaction is missing from those emails.

I'm not saying sales cannot be done effectively by inside sales representatives. We have two inside sales reps who have been with us for many years who do an amazing job. One of them was an outside rep for 20 years, and the other has always worked from the office. They send a lot of emails but they spend a large portion of their time making relationships over the phone. The rest of our sales staff goes out to visit our customers.

Besides the human interaction, there are many other benefits to selling face to face. Being able to read the customers' reactions and body language is extremely important. Albert Mehrabian, a researcher on body language says that only 7% of our communication is what we say. He contends that 93% of communication is how we say it and nonverbal. It will be much easier for our sales reps to interpret their customers when they are in front of them.

Other benefits include building trust because customers can see reps' body language, solving problems on the spot and being able to show a tangible product. The customers will be able to see the confidence your reps have in your publications. It's also easier to overcome objections when reps are in front of the customer.

It is also important for reps to see what and how customers run their businesses. Is the business thriving and busy? Are contacts too busy to see the rep? Is there a better time of the day or different day that would be better? Are there employees who need attention? Are the current employees stressed or happy to be at work? Is there already another sales rep there? Are they having trouble getting product in? Are they so stressed and overworked that they cannot keep their places of business tidy? Who is the gatekeeper? What is that person like? Does your rep need to get to know the gatekeeper better than the person making the decisions?

All kinds of questions about the customer can be answered just by walking in the door.

I no longer do outside sales. The social interaction is the part I miss the most and the customers who were happy to see me each week or month. I miss knowing about their businesses, families and employees.

I urge you to send your reps out on the road to find out the answers to all these questions just by walking through your customers' doors.

Joyce



Lee Borkowski

Attention MFCP Members: Help us Plan our Future!

*Strategic Planning Session coming up in November.
We would love to hear from you!*

Wow! The year is just flying by. MFCP has many irons in the fire and we are looking to add more!

But first, I want to be sure you are aware that we are offering online graphics training this month. That's right.... the membership asked and we're answering! **RUSSELL VIERS GRAPHICS TRAINING** – free to all MFCP members will take place on Thursday, October 26th at 1PM via Zoom. [Click here to register.](#)

The next thing I want to make you aware of is our **STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION**. Each year the board of directors spends a full day looking at all aspects of MFCP and determining how we can make it better. This year is no exception. The board will be meeting November 9th and 10th in Mason City. We'd like to hear from you before we convene. What benefits do we offer that you'd like to see further developed? What's something you'd like to see us add? What's a problem you have that we could help you solve?

To help your thought process I'll share some of the things that we currently offer:

SPRING CONFERENCES – (the next one will be held in Mankato, MN – April 4-5, 2024). We'll offer sales and graphics training as well as publisher roundtables. And, we never forget to include an opportunity to network so you can rekindle old friendships and make anew.

MCN/MDN/2x2 AD NETWORKS – you have the opportunity to sell into each of these networks, extending your clients reach and earning money for your publication. We offer free Zoom training and reward each publication with a \$50 treat for participating. Sign up is easy – just give me a call.

DIGITAL AD NETWORK – We've partnered with a 3rd party vendor to bring our members a means of selling programmatic ads. The selling pub receives a handsome commission on all sales and, again, we offer free training. If you're already using another vendor, we'd still encourage you to check out our program. Our cost per thousand has beaten every proposal we've seen to date.

CVC AUDITS – *Free to paid members.* This is the data media decision maker that members are wanting! Whether you're pitching to a national agency or wanting to provide credible data to a local advertiser this is the data you need. Just contact me and I will be happy to discuss this benefit! director@mfc.org.

DIGITAL SALES PROPOSAL - This online tool links to your CVC audit and brings your publications buying intention data to life. It's so easy to use! Let us show you how.

PUBLISHER ROUNDTABLES – at least once a quarter we hold a publisher roundtable on a hot topic. This past year we've held sessions on postal rebates, artificial intelligence, and special sections. Is there a topic you'd like to have us discuss? Reach out and let us now, we'll try to put a session together.

FALL TRAININGS – This year our fall sales training featured sessions from Ryan Dohrn. The sessions were held via Zoom and had excellent participation. In addition to sales training, we're also offering free graphics training (see the start of this column).

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS – Often we have members reach out to the office and ask a question. Sometimes we don't have an answer, other times we have one but feel there may be a better one out there. In those cases, we reach out with a MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS eblast. Through these eblasts we've had members find recommendations for software and web printers, receive input on format changes and the associated pricing that went along with that change, found a source that could provide details on a Holiday Shopping section from years prior, located contact info for a couple of major retailers, and received advice on maternity leave benefit policies. Collectively MFCP members answered these questions and many more. What could the membership help you with today?

AD AWARDS CONTEST – Every year we hold a competition that allows our members to showcase their best work. This year is no exception. The categories and guidelines for the upcoming competition can be found [HERE](#). Deadline for entering the contest is January 12, 2024.

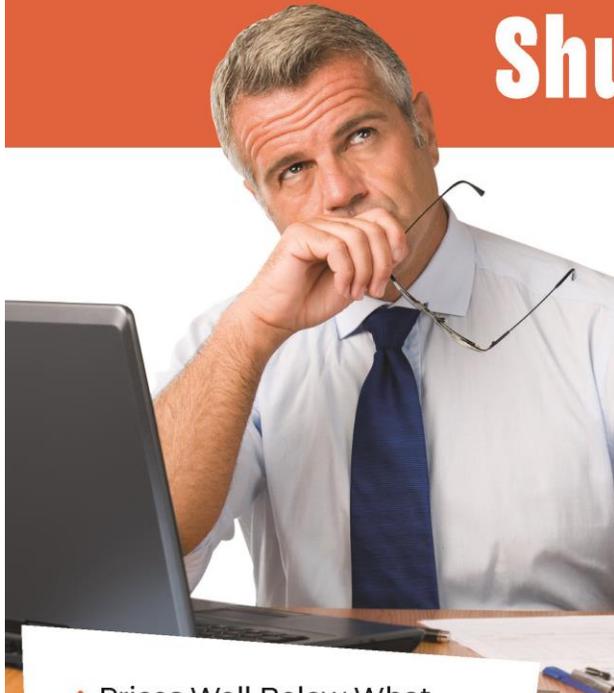
SUMMER SUMMIT – The Summer Summit is a time for publishers to meet in a relaxed environment to learn and grow. This year the Summit was held in Dubuque, Iowa and by all reports was 2nd to none. Next year we will hold our summit in Waterloo, IA at the Isle Casino Hotel. There is an awesome waterpark in Waterloo – so this will be a very family friendly meeting. The dates are July 18th and 19th. More info will be sent your way. But, please mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

So, that is just some of what we have to offer. Please let us know what you would like to see added (or removed) from the list. The board values your input and we are looking forward to having a very productive 2024! With your help we can make that happen.

Lee

Members Helping Members

Is Your Ad Design Company Shutting Down?



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MVPS at Work



By Emily Adcock
Creative Director, AdVenture, Sioux Falls, SD

Sifting Through the Chaos:

A Brief History and Overview of Robert's Rules of Order

This past month, the MVPs sat down with Mike Kolbe from The Rocket in Harlan, IA, to learn Robert's Rules of Order and how to run a meeting effectively. This parliamentary procedure dates to 1876 when an engineering officer in the army, Henry Martyn Robert, was asked to preside over a public meeting. The problem was - Robert had never run a meeting and had no prior training on protocol. The meeting left Robert utterly embarrassed, so he hit the library to study parliamentary law, determined never to find himself in that situation again. There were few books on the topic, though he did find the few available.

After years of transferring about the US for his duties in the army, he found one thing that rang true - meetings everywhere were a mess. Each area of the country thought they knew the best way to run a meeting. It was chaos, and Robert couldn't take it anymore. Thus, the birth of Robert's Rule of Order and Parliamentary Procedure came to be.

Running a meeting using Robert's Rules of Order involves a structured process to ensure fairness, efficiency, and orderly decision-making. Here's a brief overview of the key steps:

Opening the Meeting:

You'll kick things off by calling the meeting to order, then check if you have enough people present (a quorum) to get down to business. It's time to lay out the game plan by presenting and agreeing on an agenda. If someone has an item they want to discuss that's not on the agenda, they usually get a chance to add it here. It's typically best practice to finish your meeting agenda 24 - 48 hours before the meeting. Bonus points if you can email the agenda to the board beforehand, allowing them time to prepare or add an agenda item before the meeting.

Motions and Debate:

Think of motions as formal proposals—like suggesting ideas for action. Somebody makes a motion, someone else seconds it, and then it's open for discussion. Members chat about the motion, express their opinions, and hash it out until everyone has had their say.

Voting:

After the debate is wrapped up, it's time to decide. The presiding officer calls for a vote, and members raise their hands, speak up, or vote however the group decides. Majority rules! Typically, a 2/3 majority is needed to maintain fairness in the proceedings.

Handling Amendments:

Amendments are like fine-tuning a motion. This is where members can propose changes to the motion. Said changes will then go into a secondary debate and voting process. Keep in mind - too many amendments can make things confusing! Try your best to keep things organized and clear.

Closing the Meeting:

Finally, wrap it all up! The presiding officer says it's time to adjourn. Unfinished business is recorded into the meeting minutes and moved into the next meeting.

Robert's Rule of Order also has guidelines for how to sort through complex situations, such as when to abstain from a motion and how to handle gifting in business. It's best to avoid a big decision if you have personal investment or ties to the end decision.

Here's a hypothetical example: let's say the board is looking for a vendor for our upcoming MFCP spring conference, and my uncle owns a food truck in Mankato. In this instance, it's best to abstain and let the committee handle the vote. Bringing my uncle into the situation would be unfair because it could benefit our family. The same goes for gifting. It's best to keep the gifts to yourself. Even the simplest thing could be seen as a bribe to vote in their favor in the future. This will keep bias at bay and allow a fair decision. Remember, it's all about ensuring fairness, respect, and efficiency in your meetings.

Think of the Rules as a comprehensive guide on how to run a public meeting. Everyday meetings likely aren't going to follow hard and strict rules. However, keeping things on task efficiently and effectively will help the meeting flow nicely. Always be courteous, keep the topic at hand front and center, and make decisions because, at the end of the day, no one truly wants to be stuck in meetings all day!

Kevin Slimp



Critiquing Common Issues

Kevin shares what he learned while critiquing papers in Colorado

A funny thing happened to me in Denver a few days ago while I was in town to speak at the Colorado Press Association Convention.

I had just finished my fourth presentation of the weekend. The topic was “Designing a Better Newspaper.” Most of the folks in the room had been around for all four of my sessions, and the time to end the workshop had come and gone.

As people were getting up to leave, a voice spoke up. “Do you have a minute to look at my newspaper and give me some advice?”

I told her I’d gladly sit with her and look over her paper. That’s when the “funny” thing happened. Another person asked, “Could I get you to look over mine, too?”

It was as if someone blew a whistle and told everyone to stop in their tracks. Most of the group began walking back toward their seats.

I asked if anyone else would like me to look over their papers. To make a long story short, all but a few people returned to the room and took out copies of their newspapers.

I invited the group to circle me as I sat at a long table. I spread the newspapers across the table and began critiquing them individually. As I finished one paper, I immediately started critiquing the next paper. Another funny thing: no one left. Everyone stayed to see what I would say about the other papers.

We stayed in that room for nearly 90 minutes until I mentioned they were scheduled to attend a banquet in a few minutes.

As I think back to the phenomenon of a group electing to stay late at a workshop, I’m reminded of the similarities between their papers. I repeated much of my advice repeatedly as we looked through the newspapers on the table.

Here are a few of the most common critiques that came up in Denver:

Headlines: Use fewer words and bigger fonts. By using fewer words, it leaves room to use bigger text. Instead of “Rumors of new Amazon distributorship coming to town in November,” I’d suggest something like “Amazon Rumors” in big letters. A subhead underneath the headline could provide more details, “Rumors of distributorship coming to town in November seem to have merit.”

Photos: Fewer small photos should be included with stories. It seemed common for the Denver papers to place three or four smaller images with a front-page story. Because there were so many photos, they drew less attention. In many cases, I suggested a single three or four-column photo to replace the multiple photos with a story.

Page Headings: Cute is out. Consistent is in. Page headings like “Local,” “Agriculture,” and “Features” should have similar looks. As tempting as it is to use a big piece of clipart at the top of the Classified page, don’t do it. Keep the page consistent with the others.

Borders: Yes, have borders around your photos. And get rid of the drop shadows. They (drop shadows) were in five years ago, but not so much now. A thin border, .4 or .5 in width, should do the trick nicely around images. Don’t forget to keep the border inside the frame so it doesn’t stick outside the column.

Color: In my designs and redesigns, you’ll find color in only three places: color photos, ads, and kickers (those short bits of text like “County Commission” above a headline). I rarely include color in the flag (top of the front page) unless it’s in a teaser photo above it. Leave the cute clipart for the high school newspapers and church newsletters.

Above the Fold: Check out the top half of the front page (above the fold). Does it make the reader want to pick up the paper or put it down? The area above the fold should always entice the viewer to pick up the paper.

Everyone laughed as I feigned heart issues while looking over pages. I jokingly uttered, “I’ve seen worse, but I can’t remember when,” a few times. The truth is most of the papers looked pretty good, but there’s almost always a lot we can do to improve the look of our papers. And when our newspapers look better, it encourages people to pick them up and read them. Let’s face it, that’s what it’s all about.

I’ll be leading a publisher’s event in Washington state in a few days. I think I’ll encourage everyone to bring copies of their paper. It just makes my job easier.

Kevin Slimp has been a popular consultant and speaker in the newspaper industry since developing the PDF remote printing method in 1994. His upcoming webinars on design, circulation, and software can be found at newspaperacademy.com.

Kevin Slimp is former director of The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute and founder of NewspaperAcademy.com.

Ad-Libs



Don't Sell Your Clients Short

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

Gene told me about an experience he had when he was fundraising for the Boy Scouts. “I was young and completely sold on the value of scouting because some years earlier I had earned the designations of Eagle Scout and Order of the Arrow,” he said. “My boss asked me to visit a Mr. Jones, who had been a big contributor to scouting for a long time. I knocked on his door, and he welcomed me with a big smile. When we sat down in his living room, I thanked him for his support and asked if he would like to make a generous contribution of \$2,500 for that year. He enthusiastically agreed, pulled out his checkbook and wrote a check.

“When I got back to the office and proudly showed the check to my boss, he patted me on the back and said, ‘Gene, Mr. Jones is such a loyal supporter that he would have written a check for just about any amount you suggested, even more than \$2,500.’

“That was in the days before computer spreadsheets and easily access to previous years’ records,” Gene explained. “But I still felt responsible for not doing some advance research. My boss never told me what happened next, but I wouldn’t be surprised if he asked Mr. Jones to increase his contribution. It was an important lesson.”

Gene’s story applies to anyone in sales. Just about all of us have undersold our products and services at times. When you’re upselling, here are some points to keep in mind:

1. Research. As soon as his boss told him about the missed opportunity, Gene realized that he should have done some homework. In today’s world, we have lots of research tools, including in-house records on years of advertisers’ budgets and expenditures, spreadsheets, online searches of company histories and growth plans, and notes from others in your advertising department.

2. Build up to the ask. After you’ve done your research and arrived at a fair and reasonable ask – whether it’s a long-term marketing proposal or a single ad in a special section – put some thought into how you’re going to present the idea. After all, you know it’s more than your client has spent on similar things in the past.

In your presentation, begin with sincere thanks for the client’s business in the past. Then take a minute or two to describe the specific benefits of looking at a new approach to their marketing. Next, compare the benefits of the old way to the new way.

3. Reassure. Your recommendations may be a stretch for your client. As a result, it’s important to reassure them that you – and your newspaper, which has years of experience – are confident in the plan you are presenting.

4. Be flexible. Be sure to tell them you will be happy to work with them to adjust the plan once it is underway. After all, the captain of a ship sailing across the ocean continually needs to tweak the course as it goes.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



The 3 Pieces to the Perfect Sales Call

This month Ryan shares 3 components to ensure your sales calls have flow and a rhythm that makes sense.

1. Always start with a success story
2. Always bring ideas ready-to-go
3. Always use a 1-10 close

Click the link below to find out just why and how this is a formula for success

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-hwJhnCLKk>

Listen to Ryan's ad sales podcast, [Ad Sales Nation](#), on [iTunes](#) or on [Soundcloud](#). Keep up to date with Ryan's ad sales training advice on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RyanDohrnLIVE>

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning [ad sales training coach](#), a nationally recognized [internet sales consultant](#), and an international [motivational speaker](#). He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, [Selling Backwards](#). Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique [ad sales training](#) and [sales coaching](#) firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of [Sales Training World](#).